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**Sent:** 10/11/2021 12:42:14 PM  
**To:** Harris, Michael [harris.michael@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** EPA Chicago - Weekend Media Report - Monday, October 11, 2021

## EPA Chicago - Weekend Media Report - Monday, October 11, 2021

### Report Overview:









Total Clips (25)  
 Air - Quality (1)  
 Cleanup - Emergency Response (1)  
 Cleanup - Superfund (1)  
 Water - Drinking (18)  
 Water - Surface (3)  
 Other (1)

Headline	Date	Outlet	Outlet State	
<b>Air - Quality (1)</b>				
 <b>State reports on air sampling Industrial emissions: Investigators work to determine effect of prolonged exposure.</b>	10/10/2021	Kalamazoo Gazette	MI	 
<b>Cleanup - Emergency Response (1)</b>				
 <b>EPA nears end of Calumet fire cleanup</b>	10/09/2021	WLUC-TV Online	MI	 
<b>Cleanup - Superfund (1)</b>				
 <b>Big cleanup starts at closed Lake Township greenhouse</b>	10/09/2021	Akron Beacon Journal	OH	 
<b>Water - Drinking (18)</b>				
 <b>Residents urged to use bottled water amid lead crisis The state also said 15,500 cases of bottled water would be delivered to city distribution centers.</b>	10/10/2021	Kalamazoo Gazette	MI	 
 <b>Chicago Water Department Calls US Steel Leaks 'Unacceptable Disregard' for Region's Water Source</b>	10/09/2021	Chicago Tonight Online		 
 <b>Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways</b>	10/09/2021	Chippewa Herald Online	WI	 
 <b>Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways</b>	10/09/2021	Beloit Daily News Online	WI	 

	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Star Tribune Online	MN	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Daily Jefferson County Union	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	La Crosse Tribune Online	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Madison.com		 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Janesville Gazette Online	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Watertown Daily Times Online	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	HNGNews.com	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Journal Times Online	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Argus-Press Online, The	MI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Leader-Telegram Online	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	GMToday.com	WI	 
	Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways	10/09/2021	Wausau Pilot & Review	WI	 
	Chicago rips Indiana steel company for threatening our drinking water after 2 spills	10/08/2021	Chicago Sun-Times	IL	
	Chicago rips Indiana steel company for threatening our drinking water after 2 spills	10/08/2021	Chicago Sun-Times Online	IL	 

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#### Water - Surface (3)

	Benton Harbor Faces Water Crisis, Calls For Lead Pipe Replacement	10/08/2021	WSJM	MI	 
	Benton Harbor to replace nearly 100 lead lines by May 2022	10/08/2021	Herald-Palladium, The	MI	
	Benton Harbor to replace nearly 100 lead lines by May 2022	10/08/2021	Herald-Palladium Online, The	MI	 

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#### Other (1)



**News Headline:** State reports on air sampling Industrial emissions: Investigators work to determine effect of prolonged exposure. | 

**News Date:** 10/10/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Kalamazoo Gazette

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** State of Michigan toxicologists say exposure to industrial gas emissions in Kalamazoo is not being detected at levels considered harmful for short-term exposure. However, investigators are still working to determine whether prolonged exposure could be problematic for the health of people breathing the chemicals on a regular basis.

Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy hosted a virtual meeting Tuesday to brief the public on the air sampling activities around Graphic Packaging International on Kalamazoo's Northside and to answer questions about the issue.

"The hydrogen sulfide results are not expected to be a health concern over the short term, but we are keeping in mind that this is just a snapshot of time when thinking about long term exposures and what might be happening there," EGLE Toxicologist Keisha Williams said. "The evaluation of health concerns for the long-term exposures, as well as for other factors, is still being investigated."

Williams gave an overview focused on hydrogen sulfide or H<sub>2</sub>S, which is a primary chemical investigators focused on. H<sub>2</sub>S is also found in the emissions of GPI.

Officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services also spoke Tuesday.

Marta Fuoco, an air quality monitoring scientist with the EPA, explained how the agency used a mobile air monitoring vehicle with a main objective to look for hydrogen sulfide near the wastewater plant and the GPI factory. They also looked for other pollutants while monitoring for three days in Kalamazoo, Fuoco said.

Most of the values detected were below reporting limits, she said. They detected some low levels of methane, at concentrations considered inert. Low levels of VOCs, or volatile organic compounds, were detected, she said.

Odors were detected downwind of the factory and the wastewater plant, but EPA did not detect "reportable" concentrations of H<sub>2</sub>S, benzene, toluene, or P-xylene, she said.

EPA field operators smelled a "distinct odor," but they could not determine where it was coming from, she said.

"We were smelling odors but we did not see any hydrogen sulfide," she said.

Fuoco said H<sub>2</sub>S is a heavy gas, and is found in low lying areas.

Former Northside resident Brandi Crawford-Johnson called in and asked why people are experiencing burning eyes in the neighborhood.

"What could be the cause of the burning eyes? What chemical?" Crawford-Johnson said. "Would it be the methane? Would it be the hydrogen sulfide?"

Reid said hydrogen sulfide can cause eye irritation. It could also be caused by other chemicals in the air or allergies, he said.

Citizens have for some time expressed concerns about an odor on the city's Northside neighborhood and have also raised questions about possible health concerns caused by air quality issues.

"One of the things that we've really heard about from community is the fact that this community in particular feels very overburdened and underrepresented, especially from an environmental justice standpoint," EGLE moderator Jenifer

Dixon said while giving an overview at the start of the meeting.

MDHHS Toxicologist Brandon Reid said a health assessment will be completed to determine if chemicals around facilities pose a public health concern. Once the assessment is completed, MDHHS will make recommendations and issue a public report, he said.

Reid talked about an investigation into the prevalence of asthma in the community. H<sub>2</sub>S is not known to cause asthma, he said, but people with asthma may experience worse symptoms or effects when they breathe it in.

Foul odors can cause headaches and impact quality of life and affect people's well-being, Reid said, and the agency is also concerned about that.

Investigators are also looking at other sulfur compounds, ammonia and VOCs, he said.

Hydrogen sulfide is not considered a developmental toxicant that would interfere with infant growth, he said, answering a question about infant mortality.

GPI installed hydrogen sulfide monitors and changed processes at its wastewater plant to reduce odors, EGLE Air Quality Inspector Monica Brothers said.

The city's wastewater plant has also taken steps to reduce odors, installing odor monitors and carbon scrubbers to reduce odors, she said. The city is also installing a bio filter to vacuum the stink from the sewer network.

Brothers said hydrogen sulfide is a colorless gas with a strong odor of rotten eggs is produced naturally in the environment but can also come from various industrial processes like paper mills and wastewater treatment.

EGLE is doing hydrogen sulfide monitoring and it will continue enforcement discussions with the company, Brothers said.

GPI has received eight violation notices for odors from EGLE in the past decade, Brothers said.

Graphic Packaging said in a statement Tuesday night it appreciates the information provided by the government agencies at Tuesday night's meeting. The company is encouraged by the data presented, GPI said in a statement, noting the conclusion that there are no short-term health concerns from the chemicals evaluated.

"We understand that the evaluation of health concerns from long-term exposures and for other factors is still being investigated. We will continue to work alongside city leaders, and state and federal regulators, to ensure we remain a key part of the solutions that improve the health and well-being of our neighbors in Kalamazoo. For more information about our ongoing efforts, please visit [KalamazooRecycles.com](http://KalamazooRecycles.com)," the company said.

The city of Kalamazoo approved a tax abatement for an expansion of GPI in September 2020 — a \$1.6 million tax abatement, spread over 12 years, or an average of \$133,333 per year, according to GPI.

But commissioners were forced to go back to the drawing board when the state of Michigan only accepted one year of the 12-year tax abatement plan the city approved. The state said the tax abatement request could not be based on a contingency that requires GPI to reduce odors, like the plan Kalamazoo passed in 2020.

Commissioners discussed a new plan proposed by city staff at meetings in September 2021, but they decided to delay voting on the issue until after the Tuesday EGLE meeting.

The Graphic Packaging factory is adjacent to the majority-Black Northside neighborhood in Kalamazoo. Some residents there are suing the company, saying the odors and dust are reducing their property values and harming their health.

The company has participated in ongoing odor task force meetings along with the city of Kalamazoo, EGLE and others. The odor issue was discussed behind closed doors during private "subquorum" meetings including city commissioners that were once held regularly, and have since been discontinued.

In August, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services said epidemiologists are assessing "asthma prevalence and related hospitalizations" among those living around the Graphic Packaging Inc. mill at 1500 N. Pitcher Street.

EGLE said in September it partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the city of Kalamazoo to conduct air sampling. The air sampling program is currently underway and gathering both short-term and long-term air quality data, EGLE said.

In September, EGLE issued a news release to announce three violations against another facility in the area, Wright Coating Technologies, at 1603 N. Pitcher St. The facility was burning used paint filters in ovens, according to EGLE.


Information about recent inspections, enforcement, odor investigation plans and reports, and frequently asked questions about GPI may be found at [Michigan.gov/EGLEGraphicPackaging](http://Michigan.gov/EGLEGraphicPackaging).

EGLE staff continue to respond to complaints and to conduct inspections of GPI. Air quality complaints can be sent to Monica Brothers, [BrothersM@Michigan.gov](mailto:BrothersM@Michigan.gov) or 269-312-2535. Community members with questions about the meeting or needing accommodations, may contact Dina Cosier at [CosierD@Michigan.gov](mailto:CosierD@Michigan.gov) or 269-243-0954.

MLive reporter Garret Ellison contributed to this article.

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**News Headline:** EPA nears end of Calumet fire cleanup | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** WLUC-TV Online

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** ...fire debris cleanup on Fifth St. in Calumet CALUMET, Mich. (WLUC) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is nearly...

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**News Headline:** Big cleanup starts at closed Lake Township greenhouse | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Akron Beacon Journal

**Outlet State:** OH

**News Text:** LAKE TWP. "Shards of broken glass have fallen from what remained of the large greenhouse in the Uniontown area.

Home for decades to a wholesale floral business, remnants of two buildings that flanked it have been crumbling for years. Decades-old graffiti decorates the interior walls in one of the buildings, which have been gutted.

"Vandals haven't been an issue for a number of years," said Police Chief Michael Batchik.

The greater concern, however, is what could happen to neighbors who breathe the air around the 17-acre property that once served as the Delbert Smith Inc. family-run wholesale florist at 12777 Mogadore Ave. NW.

U.S. EPA crews, in the midst of a cleanup effort, have posted a mobile air monitoring station along Greenhouse Street and another elsewhere on the site, measuring dust levels.

"We don't want dust to get off-site, to get to the (nearby) residences," said Andrew Kocher, on-scene coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 5.

What is the Ohio EPA doing to a former greenhouse in Lake Township?

Kocher and his crews arrived Sept. 7. Equipped with backhoes, a front-end loader, a mini-excavator and a Bobcat, they removed trash and "a small dump truck full" of discarded tires from the buildings.

On the grounds last week, they continued to scrape up to 6 inches of soil from three of the 17 acres, including where the buildings still stand. EPA paperwork estimates that's up to 3,750 tons or 2,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil.

"A long time ago someone demolished the greenhouse and spread (the material) over three acres," Kocher said.

A lot of that material contained transite board - asbestos mixed with cement.

"When it ends up pulverized, which it was, it's in little pieces and it becomes airborne. It could be a significant hazardous to people," Kocher said. "It is slowly degrading and becoming friable."

Asbestos is known to be a health hazard, affecting the respiratory system, according to the CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

The U.S. EPA has allocated \$450,000 to remove asbestos from the soil, according to EPA paperwork and Lake Township Trustee John Arnold, who also serves on the board of the Stark County Land Bank.

After the hazardous materials are removed, the township plans to have the structures razed so that the property can be sold by the land bank. The proceeds will go toward the demolition of other abandoned or vacant properties countywide.

Delbert Smith's family-run greenhouse

and the aging property

The floral operation has not been in operation for years.

Delbert Smith opened the business in 1954, growing plants for flower shops and garden centers. The operation grew into a family business, according to "Introducing Lake Township," a book published for the Lake Township Historical Society.

Smith died at the age of 81 in January 2003. His wife of 54 years, Phyllis Hopkins Smith, who worked with him, died at the age of 95 on Sept. 18, according to their obituaries.

Ohio Department of Commerce records show the last time Smith applied for a business license was 1963. The records also show in 2005 it "merged out of existence."

The property has since been forfeited to the state, according to Stark County Auditor's Office records.

Auditor Alan Harold said Smith sold it a Lawrence Township-based building and real estate developer, who later died in a 2011 traffic crash. As a result of this death, the property taxes were not paid.

When that happens, the county treasurer can offer the property for sale for penalties, interest and fees, Harold said. If it doesn't sell, it goes to the auditor's officer to sell.

"If no one buys it, it's forfeited to the state of Ohio with the auditor acting as the agent," Harold said.

That's what happened here but the Mogadore property had a major issue in that the hazardous waste needed to be removed.

"No one was willing to take the risk to come in and clean it up," Harold said. "So that's why it languished until we could partner with the EPA and have them clean it up."

Partnerships to help clean up the site

Township workers have been providing support for the EPA project.

EPA workers pulled and piled large chunks of concrete that had been used as tables inside the greenhouse, Kocher said. The material will be crushed and hauled away by township workers to the American Landfill in the Waynesburg area. Township workers also hauled the tires to a recycling center in Canton.

Township crews also have also provided EPA workers with other amenities: "The township brought us water," Kocher said, adding that the crews were grateful. "We're working together."

Kocher said the EPA crews also plan to sample the tar paper that covers the roof of one of the buildings to check for

asbestos. But they cannot conduct the asbestos abatement on the buildings.

EPA crews are scheduled to complete mitigation efforts by the end of October.

The township is seeking bids to tear down what remains of the structures, Arnold said, adding that he doesn't expect the buildings to come down until "maybe the first quarter" of 2022.

Once the contaminated dirt is hauled away, clean dirt will be trucked in and the property will be seeded, Arnold said. When the cleanup is complete, the property will be deeded to the Stark County Land Bank.

Arnold said that the land bank will either sell or auction off the property

Reach Lori at 330-580-8309 or [lori.steineck@cantonrep.com](mailto:lori.steineck@cantonrep.com)

On Twitter: [@lsteineckREP](https://twitter.com/lsteineckREP)

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**News Headline:** Residents urged to use bottled water amid lead crisis The state also said 15,500 cases of bottled water would be delivered to city distribution centers. | 

**News Date:** 10/10/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Kalamazoo Gazette

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** Michigan health officials are advising Benton Harbor residents to use bottled water for drinking, cooking, teeth brushing and mixing baby formula due to elevated levels of lead showing up in tap water testing.

"Protecting the health and safety of Benton Harbor residents is a top priority," said Elizabeth Hertel, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services director. "We've listened to the community's concerns and out of an abundance of caution, we are recommending that residents use bottled water for cooking, drinking and brushing teeth."

The state issued the recommendation Wednesday and said 15,500 cases of bottled water would be delivered to city distribution centers in the coming days.

## PREVIOUS TESTING

The move represents an escalation in state response to concerns about lead entering tap water through old lead service lines in a city with significant exceedances of the 15 parts per billion action level over the last three years.

Testing in 2018 began showing elevated lead results. Eleven homes have tested above 15 ppb this year, with one hitting 889 ppb — nearly 60 times the action level.

Advocates have responded by pressing the city; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy; DHHS; and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's office for a stronger response.

In September, 20 environmental and public advocacy organizations filed a petition with the EPA asking for a federal intervention in the majority Black city of about 10,000 residents. The state began providing bottled water and going door-to-door to help install faucet filters and test the blood lead levels of children a couple of weeks after the petition.

"They have to tell the people the water is unsafe to drink," said Rev. Edward Pinkney, a community faith leader and president of the grassroots Benton Harbor Community Water Council, in response to Wednesday's bottled water recommendation.

"This should have been declared a state of emergency," Pinkney said. "Until someone says the water is unsafe to drink, people are going to continue drinking it; destroying their kidneys, their livers and destroying our babies' brains.

"That should have been the first thing."

â€“taking every precaution'

DHHS spokesperson Lynn Sutfin said the EPA is studying the effectiveness of filters and the state is taking "every precaution" in response to questions about an emergency declaration sent to EGLE, DHHS and Gov. Whitmer's office.

The bottled water recommendation is based on "a few homes having high lead levels in their water sample," Sutfin wrote.

"We are taking every precaution and leaning into this problem with all the tools that we have in concert with the city, local health department, Environmental Protection Agency, community groups and multiple state agencies," Sutfin wrote. "We will continue to monitor this situation and take any actions necessary to protect the residents of Benton Harbor. Bottled water will continue to be distributed to City of Benton Harbor residents through a local-state partnership as long as needed."

The bottled water recommendation was issued jointly by the two agencies "out of an abundance of caution" and is "part of an accelerated, across-the-board effort to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water while the city replaces all lead service lines," according to a news release.

The state says more than 4,500 cases of bottled water has been delivered to Benton Harbor through a local-state partnership and the incoming surge of bottles will include expanded delivery to ensure everyone has access to it.

More distribution dates and locations are planned. Residents who are unable to pick up water and/or require water delivery should call 800-815-5485 to schedule drop-offs.

"This acceleration is part of a longer-term effort to eliminate exceedances of the federal lead standard, educate the community on the effects of lead in drinking water, remove lead service lines and increase confidence in filtered water from the tap," the agencies stated.

The state's 2022 budget includes \$10 million for replacement of lead service lines in Benton Harbor and \$15 million for a new drinking water emergency fund.

troubling parallels

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no safe level of lead exposure for children. Exposure to high amounts of the toxic metal includes brain and nervous system damage, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems and hearing and speech problems. Exposure has also been tied to lower IQ and decreased attention span and performance among schoolchildren.

"Lead affects over a long term," Pinkney said. "It goes into the bones."

The Benton Harbor Water Council held a community town hall meeting Saturday. It included free faucet filter distribution and experts from Flint and Detroit.

Cyndi Roper, a senior policy advocate with the Natural Resources Defense Council in Michigan, echoed Pinkney's call for an emergency declaration on Wednesday.

"What they should have said is the â€“water is unsafe to drink,'" she said. "That's the reality. We're really disappointed they didn't just come out and say that. It's a very different message to say â€“out of an abundance of caution' versus being very clear with people that they've been drinking contaminated water for three years and need to switch to bottled water while officials and others figure out what's wrong."

Roper sees troubling parallels to early aspects of the Flint crisis response in the ongoing situation in Benton Harbor.



"The longer they wait to come out and be honest with the people of Benton Harbor, the harder it's going to be for them to regain the trust of the community," Roper said.

"It's baffling how we could be in this situation in Michigan in a majority Black community this soon after the Flint incident started," she said. "This is something none of us ever expected to happen again in Michigan."

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**News Headline:** Chicago Water Department Calls US Steel Leaks 'Unacceptable Disregard' for Region's Water Source |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Tonight Online

**Outlet State:**

**News Text:** U.S. Steel Midwest Plant on the shore of Lake Michigan, with the Indiana Dunes Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk Trail in the foreground,...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Chippewa Herald Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** Facebook Twitter WhatsApp Email Print Save By ISAAC WASSERMAN of Wisconsin Watch MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Carnetta Galvin and Melody...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** Beloit Daily News Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** Star Tribune Online

**Outlet State:** MN

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Daily Jefferson County Union

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** La Crosse Tribune Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant body...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Madison.com

**Outlet State:**

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Janesville Gazette Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Watertown Daily Times Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways | 

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** HNGNews.com

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** Journal Times Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** Argus-Press Online, The

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** Leader-Telegram Online

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021



**Outlet Full Name:** GMToday.com

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** ...and into the streets of the Darbo-Worthington neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Across the street, tall grass surrounded a stagnant...

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**News Headline:** Residents ask for action on Wisconsin's polluted waterways |  

**News Date:** 10/09/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Wausau Pilot & Review

**Outlet State:** WI

**News Text:** By ISAAC WASSERMAN of Wisconsin Watch MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Carnetta Galvin and Melody Homesly stood on Galvin's porch holding glasses of...

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**News Headline:** Chicago rips Indiana steel company for threatening our drinking water after 2 spills | 

**News Date:** 10/08/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Sun-Times

**Outlet State:** IL

**News Text:** The city calls the two recent spills "unacceptable" and urges Indiana and EPA officials to take action. Mayor Lori Lightfoot's Administration is asking Indiana and U.S. environmental officials to crack down on industrial businesses along Lake Michigan to protect the region's drinking water after U.S. Steel's Portage, Ind., plant dumped contaminants in the water twice in a two-week period.

"U.S. Steel's disregard for our region's most precious natural resource is unacceptable," the Chicago Department of Water said in a statement. "Millions of Illinoisans rely on Lake Michigan as their water supply. We urge the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency] to respond urgently to this matter and to make protection of the lake from industrial pollution a priority."

The latest accident at the steel plant took place Thursday when oil spilled into a commercial harbor that connects to Lake Michigan. Company officials said they believe the oil spill was contained and did not flow into the lake, though an investigation continues. Indiana officials say some oil was seen outside the contained area and they continue to look into the matter. Nearby Indiana Dunes beaches remained closed Friday pending water test results.

On Sept. 26, a large discharge of iron into the lake from the same plant created a massive rust-colored plume that spread out into the lake. That accident prompted a local water utility in Indiana to shut down a treatment plant and it forced the closure of all Indiana Dunes beaches for several days. While acknowledging the iron release, U.S. Steel and environmental regulators said levels of more serious toxic metals such as chromium and hexavalent chromium were not detected at unsafe levels.

Chicago water officials said they conducted their own water sampling following the September accident and found no contamination to the city's drinking water. Those samples were collected from the lake near the spill and at the Sawyer Water Purification Plant on the South Side, one of two treatment facilities operated by the city.

The city said it should be immediately notified of any discharge of contaminants "as rapid notification enables us to respond rapidly to protect our water supply."

The city was notified by the company about the oil spill this week but received no notification about the iron discharge last month, Chicago Water Management spokeswoman Megan Vidis said.

U.S. Steel spokeswoman Amanda Malkowski declined to comment. Barry Sneed, a spokesman for the Indiana environmental agency, said he could not immediately comment. EPA officials declined to comment.

The EPA and Indiana have said that both accidents are under investigation.

Separately, U.S. Steel recently agreed to pay \$1.2 million in penalties and reimbursements to government agencies related to earlier releases of hexavalent chromium in Lake Michigan. The company also committed to undertake "substantial measures to improve wastewater treatment and monitoring systems" at its plant, according to an EPA statement in early September.


"It requires U.S. Steel to undertake numerous measures to improve its facility, which will ensure the future protection of Lake Michigan and Northwest Indiana's environment," Bruno Pigott, Indiana's top environmental official, said in the statement.

On Friday, Indiana officials said they continue to investigate the cause of the oil spill and "the potential repercussions under the recently entered consent decree and state agreed order."

Brett Chase's reporting on the environment and public health is made possible by a grant from The Chicago Community Trust.

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**News Headline:** Chicago rips Indiana steel company for threatening our drinking water after 2 spills | 

**News Date:** 10/08/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Sun-Times Online

**Outlet State:** IL

**News Text:** ...We urge the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency] to respond urgently to...

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**News Headline:** Benton Harbor Faces Water Crisis, Calls For Lead Pipe Replacement | 

**News Date:** 10/08/2021


**Outlet Full Name:** WSJM

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** ... Last month, environmental groups filed an emergency petition with the Environmental Protection Agency to get a free and safe...

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**News Headline:** Benton Harbor to replace nearly 100 lead lines by May 2022 | 

**News Date:** 10/08/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Herald-Palladium, The

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** BENTON HARBOR â€” Plans are underway to replace at least some of the lead water service lines in Benton Harbor.

Jason Marquardt, senior project engineer with Abonmarche, said the city received bids on Sept. 8 to replace almost 100 lead service lines by the end of May 2022. Abonmarche operates as the city's engineering company.

"We're in the process of awarding the contract to the contractor and we're getting ready to start that program late October into November," he said.

The houses slated to have their lead service lines at least partially replaced can be found on the city's website at [www.bhcity.us/water](http://www.bhcity.us/water).

This is the first round of homes to have their lead service lines replaced, using a \$5.5 million grant the city received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in October 2020. He said the estimated cost of this first batch of homes, which are scattered all over the city, is \$563,000.

The EPA grant is expected to help the city replace about 888 lead service lines over the next four years.

The problem, Marquardt said, is that the city's water distribution system is more than 100 years old, with many homes built before the 1960s.

The water leaving the city's water plant doesn't have lead in it, he said. Neither do the pipes delivering the water to the property lines of the homes.

However, many of the water service lines from the property line to the home are made of lead or have lead components in them, he said.

Traditionally, homeowners were responsible for the water lines starting at their property line. But changes in state law now require municipalities to replace lead service lines at no cost to the homeowner to the first shut-off valve inside the home or 18 inches inside the home, whichever is shortest.

Meanwhile, Marquardt said the city is using \$140,000 from a state grant to "pothole" the connection the city has with 350 homes to find out if they need to be replaced.

"That has the contractor physically digging up the shut off and verifying the materials on both the public side and the private side," he said.

He said the work started in 2019 and will continue until all of the 3,030 active water accounts in the city have been checked and replaced if needed.

More help

Until recently, Marquardt said the city has been hampered by a lack of funding to replace the lead service lines.

But more help is on its way.

In September, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed the state's 2022 fiscal budget, which includes \$10 million to replace lead service lines in the city. And the city is expected to receive another \$10 million in federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act.

"There's likely another bid package that's going to have between 250 to 300 service replacement, probably out by the end of the year for a contractor to start replacing more in 2022," Marquardt said.

State law allows municipalities to replace the lead service lines over 20 years, but calls to replace them faster have been becoming stronger, especially since a group of 20 organizations filed a petition with the EPA in September, saying that residents need clean drinking water now.


On Wednesday, state health officials urged Benton Harbor residents to use bottled water for cooking and drinking in a joint news release with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy.

Benton Harbor has been under a state advisory for lead since October 2018, when routine summer sampling found higher-than-acceptable levels of lead in some of the city's tap water.

Since then, the city has been required to test a sampling of homes every six months.

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**News Headline:** Benton Harbor to replace nearly 100 lead lines by May 2022 | 

**News Date:** 10/08/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Herald-Palladium Online, The

**Outlet State:** MI

**News Text:** ...lines replaced, using a \$5.5 million grant the city received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in October 2020. He...

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**News Headline:** Chicago EPA office to be led by Evanston politician Debra Shore | 

**News Date:** 10/07/2021

**Outlet Full Name:** Chicago Sun-Times

**Outlet State: IL**

**News Text:** EPA Region 5 is one of the biggest offices for the country's top environmental enforcer, tackling thousands of air, water and land pollution issues in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Debra Shore, who has served as an elected commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District since 2006, will head the six-state Midwest headquarters of the Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago, the Sun-Times has learned.

Shore, 69, will lead EPA Region 5, one of the biggest offices for the country's top environmental enforcer. It tackles thousands of air, water and land pollution issues in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin as well as 35 Native American tribes. She'll be responsible for protecting Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes, the source of drinking water for tens of millions of people. The region also includes more than 100 of the most toxic waste sites under the U.S. Superfund cleanup program, a legacy of the manufacturing concentration in the rust-belt states.

"It's a big job with big responsibilities and I believe Debra Shore is up for the challenges," said Howard Learner, executive director of the advocacy organization Environmental Law & Policy Center in Chicago. "The EPA Region 5 administrator is probably the biggest regional administrator job in the country because it has the usual responsibilities along with the Great Lakes national program office and the enormous number of Superfund and other toxic sites."

Shore declined to comment. The pick, which is a joint decision between President Joe Biden's EPA Administrator Michael Regan and the White House, was earlier reported by Politico. The Sun-Times confirmed the news with a person who has firsthand knowledge of the appointment.

The regional administrator also will be faced with a number of environmental justice issues, which is a term referencing the inordinate pollution problems in low-income communities of color.

Shore was in a competitive two-person race with former Obama Administration official Micah Ragland, who emphasized his environmental justice credentials as he interviewed for the job. A native of Flint, Michigan, now based in Detroit, Ragland would have been the first Black full-time regional administrator for EPA Region 5. Ragland, now a vice president of public affairs for the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, was endorsed by more than 50 EPA Midwest workers of color in May. He also had the backing of the regional office's union, which represents about 1,000 scientists, engineers and other employees.

Shore had strong support from U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and several Democratic members of Congress in Illinois. Ragland had endorsements from half a dozen Democratic Michigan lawmakers in Congress.

During her time at MWRD, which oversees the treatment of sewer wastewater and flooding controls, she has publicly focused on clean water issues. However, Shore told the Sun-Times in December that environmental justice would be a priority, echoing a promise from the Biden Administration.

EPA Administrator Regan stepped into one of the biggest environmental justice controversies in Chicago last May, asking Mayor Lori Lightfoot to hold off on issuing an operating permit to a new car-shredding operation on the city's Southeast Side. Lightfoot obliged, an action that prompted a lawsuit from the business' owner Reserve Management Group.

Shore has also vowed to restore morale at the office after President Donald Trump's Administration cut staff, inspections and enforcement.

"We are hopeful that a new day is dawning at EPA. We had four dark years under the Trump administration," Nicole Cantello, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 704, said in a statement. "We are glad to have this appointment filled so that we can move forward with the urgent issues that face the region."

Brett Chase's reporting on the environment and public health is made possible by a grant from The Chicago Community Trust.

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